

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2956

INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION USBERLIN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, GW, PO, NATO

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SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER GEORG LEBER COMMENTS ON THE

VISIT OF PORTUGUESE ADMIRAL COUTINHO

1. SUMMARY: DEFENSE MINISTER GEORG LEBER TOLD THE AFL-CIO EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE, IRVING BROWN , AND THE LABOR ATTACHE THAT HE HAD RECEIVED AN INVITATION FROM PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES TO VISIT PORTUGAL. BUT HE SAID THAT HE WILL NOT ACCEPT UNTIL THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN PORTUGAL STABILIZES.

END SUMMARY.

2. LEBER TOLD AFL-CIO EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE, IRVING BROWN, AND THE EMBASSY LABOR ATTACHE THAT HE HAD BEEN VERY FRANK WITH ADMIRAL COUTINHO DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE FRG JULY 1-3 AND HAD TOLD COUTINHO THAT THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP HAS TWO CHOICES. IT CAN CHOOSE AN ALLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNISTS WHICH WOULD MEAN A RIGID DICTATORSHIP FOR MANY YEARS IN PORTUGAL, CONTRARY TO THE STATED OBJECTIVES OF THE REVOLUTIONARY REGIME, LIMITED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE SOVIET UNION WHICH WOULD BE INSUFFICIENT TO SOLVE PORTUGAL'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND THE ELIMINATION OF PORTUGAL'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO WITH ALL THE RESULTING CONSEQUENCES. THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE IS TO FOLLOW UP THE RECENT DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS BY ESTABLISHING A DEMOCRATIC REGIME IN PORTUGAL. AS A DEMOCRACY, PORTUGAL WOULD IMPLEMENT THE AVOWED GOALS OF THE REVOLUTION, RECEIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR AN ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM FROM THE FRG, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND THE US AND REMAIN IN NATO WITH ALL OF THE ACCOMPANYING BENEFITS, INCLUDING PRIVATE INVESTMENT, A PREREQUISITE FOR PORTUGAL'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY. COUTINHO SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY FAVORED THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE SINCE ANY PERMANENT ALLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNISTS WAS A SURE ROAD TO THE RETURN OF A "FASCIST GOVERNMENT" IN PORTUGAL. WHEN LEBER ASKED HIM WHETHER THIS WAS JUST HIS PERSONAL OPINION OR WHETHER THIS WAS AN OPINION WHICH COULD BE RECORDED IN A MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION, COUTINHO REPLIED THAT HIS OPINION COULD BE RECORDED FOR THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RECORD.

3. COUTINHO THEN INVITED LEBER TO VISIT PORTUGAL. LEBER REPLIED THAT HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO VISIT PORTUGAL PROVIDED HE RECEIVED AN INVITATION FROM COSTA GOMES AND PROVIDED HE, LEBER, "COMES THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR" ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT. COUTINHO ASSURED LEBER THAT HE WOULD RECEIVE AN INVITATION

FROM COSTA GOMES. IN FACT LEBER RECEIVED THIS
INVITATION SHORTLY BEFORE THE RECENT GOVERNMENTAL
CRISIS IN LISBON.
HILLENBRAND

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